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Open Letter To The Silent Majority

Sidney Slomich

Here is a story, my friends. One night a man dreamt that a monster was on his chest, choking him, trying to kill him. The man woke up in terror and saw the monster above him. "What is going to happen to me," the man cried. "Don't ask me," replied the monster, "it's your dream."

Take your society, your law's integrity, and your country back from the experts. I have been an "expert" and I can tell you that experts gone wild — and they have — are like cancer. They know only one thing: more, more, more of the same. Nothing is more expert than cancer, nothing a better example of power without purpose. Cancer is ignorant, but, oh, it works, it grows.

I have been an expert, have lived among them in their anti-communities — could have rested among them. I hope I have left them well behind me. An expert sees his small piece of reality and little else. He confuses understanding with control and makes of the latter his single virtue. One of our leading social scientists has said that the chief accomplishment of this age is to have changed so many political problems into technical ones. We see in Vietnam, as at Auschwitz, the result of technical solutions to political problems.

So I have been an expert, and I'm not bragging about it. I accepted the necessity of working within the system, believed that it was possible in that way both to affect the system itself constructively and to accomplish something. Only in the late sixties did I come to understand that government, business, and what is correctly called "the Establishment," were too inert, too committed to the shape of things as they have been to inaugurate human policies, that for change the people had to take government back to themselves. Only the people awakened and grasping for power from these mindless megainstitutions can effect change.

In 1964 I sat in disbelief in a Washington think tank, listening to prevent the people of this to a very well-financed Army country from determining their proposal to develop a own destinies is basically a fake. computerized electronic warning Over the last twenty years I have system to alert the Pentagon when had a continuous Top Secret a Latin American country was clearances from the Army, State, likely to go "red," and — the CIA, Defense, ACDA — the system having been perfected on sometimes from more than one. I paper — to rent a whole Latin never learned one thing of value. American country and army to Everything valuable that I have test it out. This stupid and learned, known, said, perceived, or written has come from an unbelievably naive project was the open, scholarly unclassified source product of Ph.D.'s, men who call or from newspapers, journals, or the scientists. When this project was my own observations. All these discovered by Chileans who sources are open to you. observed some strangely behaving researchers, it hit the press and There is no silent majority. was investigated by Congress. Man is a speaking animal. There is When, from the beginning, I only a silenced majority, a criticized Project Camelot, I was repressed, clamped-down, and asked, annoyed, why I was frightened majority. You. You always being so "negative." This is have been frightened and you have been silenced. is a particularly apt, yet typical, example of the allegedly scientific thinking that likes behind Vietnam and all the horrors it has brought to roost in this country and all over the world.

I could give many more examples, but I don't want to take up time with horror stories. Suffice it to say that over the last generation, especially the last fifteen years, the United States — at home and abroad — has been preoccupied not with human life and its purposes, but with ignorant power and control — that is to say with death — and has become, along with the Soviet Union, as a colleague in mindless adversity, the planet's greatest polluter, an agent of potentially total repression, and the greatest threat to continued human life the world has ever faced. I do not like to say these things, but one must speak plainly. There is a monster on our chest.

But it is our dream, and what happens next is up to us, to no one else. I can speak so plainly because I think this nation can throw the monster off its chest. The hope of this nation, that are that hope. The entire system

the Research Analysis Corporation. Slomich was senior scientist and then Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Study Group at Cal Tech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, immersed in studies for NASA and ACDA on vital inspection and proliferation issues. He has also studied educational policy and counseled foreign governments in urban affairs for the Stanford Research Institute. For 16 years, Slomich worked exclusively within the established foreign policy and governmental system, in public and private organizations, usually in circumstances involving heavy or nearly exclusive use of classified, secret materials.)

Look, these war rooms paneled in walnut, those massive files, those contracts for millions of dollars worth of death and death-research, those fancy desks and chairs, all the paraphernalia of power, bases, buildings, bombs, and all the rest, they are all yours. They belong to you. Take them back, make a human use of them, make this your society, as it is your life. Everything you do, everything you can do, to please yourself and build your life is more beautiful and more real than the fakery, abstraction, obsession, and desire for death that rules this country today. That's the only secret worth knowing. Once you know it you can take back this nation — with difficulty.

Once you know it you will. And then we'll speak not of the American Nightmare, but the American Dream.

(Sidney Slomich, author of *The American Nightmare*, has done research for the Army on Czechoslovakia, spent a number of years as an officer of the CIA, and has worked on strategic